

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 1- Luke 1:34&35**

12- The Importance of the Virgin Birth Part 1

January 4, 2009

Luke 1:34&35

The Saturday edition of the Sun Herald from December 27th had an article in it about a Church on Pass Road in Biloxi. In the article the woman pastor made the statement that the agenda for her Church was not preaching the Gospel so that men may repent and be saved- but was "Social Justice" and "feeding and clothing the poor".

Then she went on to say that her Church welcomed everyone- regardless of what their orientation was, regardless of what their beliefs were, and regardless of what their religion was.

Now I suppose that most people who read that article were very impressed with this woman's willingness to include people from every walk of life and will applaud her for throwing away 2,000 years of Christian History and Biblical Truth so she can be well thought of and can have a large congregation very quickly.

But let me say also in the clearest most possible way that talk like that is exactly what the problem is in the modern Church- because this dear lady could not be more wrong, more off base, more unbiblical, and more contradictory to actually helping the very people she purports to help.

Some 2,000 years ago, Pontius Pilate had a very important question of Jesus when the sinless Lamb of God stood before him during His Trial when Pilate asked in **John 18:38**:

What is truth?

You see, if Truth exists, and it does, then it is objective, it is teachable, and it is learnable- we can learn it and we can know it.

Truth is definable- it is not a mist that floats around and changes with the wind or circumstances. Truth is Absolute; it is steadfast; it is eternal or else it would be opinion and not Truth.

And Truth is imposed on Man by God. Moral Absolutes, right and wrong, that which is holy and that which is profane is not and does not originate from Man, but Truth comes from the Mind and Heart of God.

And that Truth was exhaled by the very Mouth of God, and God the Holy Spirit moved on holy men who faithfully and accurately write down that Divine Truth, and that Truth- the Body of teaching that is contained within the 66 Books of the Holy Bible has been miraculously and supernaturally preserved for us today- paved in the blood of the martyrs so that what we hold in our hands this morning is a reliable and trustworthy copy of that Body of teaching that collectively makes up the full force and rule of the Christian Faith.

And we are here today- not to reinvent the wheel, not to find some new "truth" or to receive some new "revelation"- but we are here today to seek after that Truth, to find it and to cherish it and to value it and to learn it and be able to teach it and to defend it from all detractors.

We are not here today to reinvent Church or to hear some *new* thing, but we are here to learn about the *first* thing, the *original* thing, the *true* thing. We are here to earnestly and to sincerely contend for the Faith- the already given Faith, the already revealed Faith, the already written Down and articulated Faith- the ancient Christian Faith- that is found inside this Book- because that is the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

So the business of the Church- yea, the business of the people of God- you dear men and woman who sit here this morning- is to first know Truth, then to love Truth, then it is to obey Truth, and then to faithfully proclaim Truth in its fullness without fear or fail- regardless of the repercussions that that proclamation may bring to you personally.

You see, if God is as holy as the Bible declares Him to be, and if Man is as sinful and lost as the Bible declares him to be, and if the one single way for anyone to be forgiven and saved is through the foolishness of preaching the already given Revelation of God contained in the Good News of the Gospel- if that is true- then our duty, our responsibility, our commission to preach this already given and already received Gospel to every Creature, and to preach it rightly and to

preach it fully and to preach it fearlessly so that men may hear and believe and repent and be saved.

So while I will and I do clothe the naked and feed the hungry and speak out for the voiceless and give a cup of water to those who are thirsty- I give that cup of water in the Name of the Lord so that while they may get their thirst quenched and their home repaired and their belly full- they also see their sin and confess their sin that they have committed against a holy God and they also repent of that sin and renounce that sin and turn from that sin and so that they will fully trust in the finished Work of Jesus Christ alone for Salvation so that their soul is saved or everything else is all in vain.

Truth matters, dear friends, and be sure that you understand that Truth is not simply esoteric arguments about how many angels can dance of the head of a pin- but the search for and the capture of Truth by the seeking soul is the most noble enterprise and the most practical exercise that anyone can engage in- because without Truth- nothing else matters. Without Truth- life is cheap because life would be without purpose and would simply be random and without merit and there would be no right and from wrong and everything would be relative and without meaning.

So here in this place we put a high premium on Divine Truth and we seek to study it and understand it because only through knowing God can we rightly worship God, and only through rightly worshipping God can God be rightly honored, and only by God being rightly honored can our joy be full because we were made in the very Image and Likeness of God to love God; to worship God by our humble and obedience service and only in that way can we be fully satisfied.

So we seek to ask and answer three questions every time we gather together to examine this Divine Truth and those questions are:

1. What did God the Holy Ghost actually *say* in this verse or passage?
2. What did God the Holy Ghost *mean* by what He said?
3. How can I *apply* that Eternal Divine Truth to my life in the 21st Century?

And again the purpose of going through this is not to become academics or to get some new information about God, but the goal is

worship. I love Jesus and I want to get to know Him, and one of the best ways that I can get to know Jesus is by understanding what God said about Himself in Scripture.

Jesus said in **Matthew 4** that it matters to God how and why we worship God. That it is not alright with God that we come to Him any way we want to and give God whatever we choose to give to Him and do whatever we feel like and call that "worship". That, in fact, God the Father seeks after those who will worship God in both Spirit and Truth. Not just Spirit and not just Truth- but both Spirit and Truth. And we must know that we cannot worship the one true living God by celebrating and accepting and rejoicing in and being a part of that which God has called "Sin".

But we must know that true "spiritual" worship is that we come to love what God's Loves and we grow to hate what God hates. And we call sin "sin", and we call Righteousness "righteousness", and we do not call evil "good", and we do not call good "evil".

We must also know that unless and until we worship God in Spirit and in Truth- we really are not worshipping God at all- because that is the one single way in which God receives worship.

So since that is true- it would behoove us to learn just what it means to worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

Firstly, we must realize that worship is not what we do during the song service on Sunday. Worship is the way in which you look at life, the way you handle money, the way you treat your spouse, the way you raise your children, and the way you conduct yourself in this life.

Therefore- Worshipping in Spirit is not some mystical self-hypnosis, it is not some "place" that you rise up into while the music is playing- but is, in fact, nothing more nor less than conducting our daily lives after the Divine Pattern of Scripture- which is the product of the Heart and Mind and Mouth of Almighty God.

Worshipping in Spirit is the daily struggle to humbly submit yourself to God, to God's Word, and to God's Will by obeying what God the Holy Spirit authored in Scripture. To live in submission to God's Word is, therefore, to worship in Spirit. To live your daily life in rejection or disobedience to God's Word on a fundamental level is, therefore, to value *your* ways above God's Ways, and that, dear friends, is Celestial High Treason- not worship.

The great prophet, Isaiah told us this when he said in **Isaiah 66:2**:

... But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

And Jesus was talking about Spirit worship when He said in **Matthew 16:24-27:**

24 If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

Worshipping in Truth simply means that it is real, that it is not fake, that the way you conduct yourself on Sunday in Church is not a means to look spiritual to others so you can fool them into believing that you are something you are not- but the way you behave yourself on Sunday is nothing more than a natural outflow of your own genuine love and devotion to God all during the other six days a week. God hates hypocrites and said so in **Isaiah 29:13:**

Then the Lord said, Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,

And this prophecy by Isaiah was repeated and made more clear by Jesus Himself in **Matthew 15:7-9:**

7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:

8 ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

9 ‘BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’

So the only way we can truly worship God is to know God as He has revealed Himself to us by and through the Truth of Scripture, and that is why part of the premeditated attack against Truth in our day is the relentless attack against the validity and trustworthiness of Scripture. Because if they can get you to doubt what God has said- then you will never know Truth and you will be as confused as they are.

And this effort didn't begin in our day but has been the standard operating procedure ever since the Garden when the first words out of Satan's mouth was to produce doubt about God's Word when he told Eve in **Genesis 3:1**:

Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'

So, ever since God uttered the first Words to Man- Satan has been trying to discredit them or to outright reject them, and we must be wise about this so that we are not naïve as to what is at stake here. That which God has said is True and it is valuable and is of the utmost importance to us today- and therefore the study and understanding of the Holy Scriptures- the Word of the Lord- is the most worthwhile effort that anyone can ever engage in because this collection of 66 Books is the only location on the face of the earth where inspired, inerrant, infallible Words are located.

And part of Divine Truth that is under unrelenting assault in our day is The Doctrine of the Virgin Birth. So I want to spend some time on the concept of the virgin Birth and why it is so vital for us today in the 21st Century.

According to *Christianity Today Magazine*- a full 45% of all those who stand behind the pulpits of American Churches do not believe in the Virgin Birth, and, in fact, they outright reject the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. So my goal in this sermon today and the sermons over the next several weeks- is, by God's Grace, to show you how important this Doctrine is, and then to show you how this Divine Truth ties in with your own personal Salvation in Jesus.

So on that note- please turn with me to look at **Luke 1:30**. Now please keep in mind as we go through this that **The Gospel According to Luke** is the third Book in the New Testament was written by the beloved physician named Luke who also wrote **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**. And we're not very far into this incredible Story of Salvation-

we are still in **Luke 1:30-** but we need to remember that Chapter 1 is 80 verses long and a lot has happened in the preceding 29 verses- so we're going to be here for a while.

This Chapter is also very foundational in understanding Biblical Christianity and Christian Theology. In fact, in some ways this morning we're going to be a bit more of a theologian than an expositor as we consider the issue of the Miraculous Conception of the God the Son- the Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of Mary.

So let's begin by refreshing ourselves with the Divine Announcement:

Luke 1:30-33

30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

And we went over that in great detail last week- and now look at Mary's response to all that the angel Gabriel has just told her:

Luke 1:34-37

34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

35 The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

36 And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Now look at the next verse:

Luke 1:38

And Mary said, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Now here is really where the Story of Jesus Christ starts historically. The angel Gabriel comes to a teen-aged girl, maybe as young as 13 or as old as 15, who lived in a humble little hamlet- a very unremarkable place called, Nazareth, and this angel- the first in over 400 years tells her that God has chosen her for special Grace and special Favor which is that she will become the mother of the Son of God and that she will conceive and bear that Son while still a virgin.

Now the Conception of Jesus Christ after this manner is unique in all of human history. This is the greatest miracle that has ever happened or that will ever happened as God Himself took on flesh and became Man. And this is the only time that this has or will ever occur.

And this Virgin Birth is absolutely critical to the Christian message. This is critical to the Gospel. This is critical to Christianity and to Biblical Theology because it protects the Nature of Christ as being both God and Man.

You see, Jesus had to be born of God to be Son of God. And He had to be born of a woman to be Son of Man. And so in this incredible miracle- Mary who is human and God Who is Divine are brought together, and a Son is born of God and of woman- Who is both God and Man- the God/Man Jesus Christ.

And the Nature of Jesus Christ as God and Man is at the heart of the Christian Faith. If anyone denies the Deity of Jesus Christ- they cannot possibly be saved- no matter what else they believe and they have, in fact, destroyed Christianity.

When you take away the Virgin Birth- what you have left is a satanic, deceptive, counterfeit, lying religion invented by men and demons to destroy the real Truth.

Now I have been asked by many people whether it is essential to believe that Jesus was conceived in a virgin. And the answer is, "Absolutely, yes!" because it is essential to saving faith to put your full trust in the finished Work and in the Person of the one true Christ- and to do that- the Jesus that you trust must be the Jesus of Scripture and not another Jesus that has been invented by Man.

To be saved- we must all believe that Jesus is who He said He was- and Who Jesus said He was – was God and Man, and that belief- that confession is preserved in this very Truth of Virgin Conception.

Now Biblical history has had some amazing births from the beginning. The birth of Isaac, for example, was absolutely miraculous. The father of Isaac was Abraham and he was 100-years- old. The mother of Isaac was Sarah and she was 90-years-old and barren- unable to have children, and at *that* age God graciously and miraculously gave Abraham and Sarah a son, Isaac, a real miracle child. And Isaac then really became the father of the whole redemptive community through whom the Messiah would finally come...a notable child, a covenant child.

To the barren wife of Manoah, **Judges 13** says, "Whose womb had been closed," to the barren of Manoah was given a son- her womb miraculously opened by God to give her a son. And this son was not like any other son who ever lived before or since. This son could take a lion in his bare hands and turn the lion inside out. This son could slay thousands with the jawbone of an ass. This son was so powerful that he could bring down a stoned temple on himself and thousands of others who were buried in the rubble of it. This son was Samson.

And then there was the barren Hannah who pined away because she never had a child. And the Lord opened her womb that He had shut and gave her a son named Samuel...not just any son, but Samuel the prophet, Samuel the priest, Samuel the anointer of kings.

And as we come in to the New Testament and already as we moved into the first chapter of Luke- we met a barren old couple, Zacharias and Elizabeth. And we know they were old because he was serving as a priest in his old age. There was a 60-year cap on service for the Levites, but there was no cap on service for the priests. And so he well could have been in his seventies or even his eighties- and they never had had children. And God allowed Zacharias and Elizabeth to come together and conceive a son. And she who was barren became pregnant, not just any son was born out of that union, but John the Baptist of whom Jesus said he was the greatest man who had ever lived up until his time. He was the forerunner of the Messiah Himself.

So Isaac was miraculously born, Samson was miraculously born, Samuel was miraculously born, and John the Baptist was miraculously born. And all of them with incredible and astounding lives as God miraculously and supernaturally allowed those children to be conceived and be born.

And there have been some remarkable births that weren't miraculous. In our own society we all look back to the 1934 event in Canada when the Dionne quintuplets were born and that without the aid of any fertility drug...a rare, almost unheard of birth of five children at once.

And more recently it's becoming a bit more common as fertility drugs are being used today. And we read about...well it was back in, I think, 1973 when the Stannick sextuplets were born in Colorado. And then it was the McCoys, and I think they had seven. And then recently somewhere, I think, eight. And that is astounding to all of us. Fertility drugs are involved in that. There is no miracle occurring there. It takes a man and a woman in the normal way to produce children, it's just the amount, the litter that is a bit rare, induced by drugs.

I think in my life time probably the most defining and remarkable birth was the birth of little Louise Brown, five pounds, twelve ounces, born to John and Leslie Brown of Lancashire, England, on July 25, 1978. The first child ever born, conceived outside human bodies. For the first time God permitted a baby to be born that had been conceived outside the human body.

After years and years, 12 years of specific research, the capability came to remove a mother's egg, fertilize it with a sperm removed from a father, do it all in a test tube, then place that fertilized egg back into the womb of a mother, or for that matter a surrogate mother, to be cared until birth. That's amazing. And it's becoming something we take for granted today.

And so, if you look at Biblical history there have been some really amazing births, miraculous, supernatural births. And if you just look at modern history, there have been some amazing non-miraculous, non-supernatural, normal births assisted by science.

Science has even made some attempt at what is called "Parthenogenesis". Parthenos is the Greek word "virgin," and Parthenogenesis literally means "virgin generated" or "virgin conceived." Science is determined today to allow life to be reproduced without the normal partnership of male and female. And through lab experiments they have produced parthenogenic life among some lower forms.

For example, within the world of honey bees, the unfertilized eggs can be developed into drones or males. It was in 1886 that a man

named Decomehoff was able to create artificial parthenogenesis in unfertilized eggs of silkworms. Morgan and Mead from 1896 to 1900 started the eggs of sea urchins and marine worms to develop by placing them in various salt solutions, sea water. In 1939 and 1940 Pincus produced several rabbits- all female- through chemical and temperature effects on rabbit ova.

Never has any kind of parthenogenesis been done however on the human level. It is a biological impossibility. There is no scientific explanation, no fertility drugs, no external lab kind of environment, no environment can be created to produce Parthenogenesis on a human level.

But even if Parthenogenesis of some form could somehow be achieved on a human level- and it can't- but let's say, for the sake of discussion that it could- in this case here with the Virgin Mary- Parthenogenetically bearing a son would be impossible. Here's why.

You see, geneticists have demonstrated that all mammals have two X chromosomes in the females and the males have both an X and a Y chromosome. Most of you remember this from your High School education. Thus, if you took an unfertilized egg cell, a female egg cell and could somehow create an environment in which it could reproduce itself- two X chromosomes could only reproduce X chromosomes, and, therefore, the product of that parthenogenesis would have to be female. And that was the case in the Pincus rabbits. They were female only.

So even if somehow we could assume that there was some way in which natural Parthenogenesis could occur- and we know it can't humanly- but even if it could- Mary would only have been able to produce a daughter- not a son. So when Mary as a virgin- gave birth to a Son- there was no human explanation. And that's exactly the way God designed it. Since the human determines the sex of the child, it is obvious that the sex of Jesus' human nature was determined by God. God Divinely produced a male child. He produced the male chromosomes and supernaturally fertilized the egg in Mary's womb.

So while there have been several amazing and miraculous births throughout Scripture and while there have been some wonderful achievements in science- the ethics of which are certainly debatable- the fact remains that none of the supernatural births throughout Scripture and none of the scientifically advanced capabilities of our modern time to produce unique births come anywhere close to the virgin conception

of Jesus Christ. There is simply no scientific or human explanation- this is a great miracle.

But we need to know that Jesus was not the miracle child of a barren married woman- who was made fertile by God. No, Jesus was conceived in a virgin. He could not be parthenogenetically produced. It wasn't that He was some freak of nature in a pre-sophisticated scientific time, as remote as such a quasi-natural explanation might be, it's impossible to produce a son. He was born of a woman, conceived in a womb where no male sperm existed and where no female capability to reproduce a man was possible. Christ had no earthly father.

So that makes this Birth to be the most amazing birth ever and the only one like it. Jesus Christ was conceived in a virgin without a male source for a seed, conceived...it says in verse 35...because the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High, the Creator God Himself will overshadow you, then the holy offspring that is produced will not be the Son of man, but...what?...Son of God.

Now please allow me to tell you something about the Christian Faith. Christianity is predicated on the fact that God Himself was conceived and born in a human womb. That's what we call The Incarnation. And the Incarnation is not some side issue that has nothing to do with your own relationship to God- but this one single miraculous Birth is the foundation of Christianity.

And if you monkey around with this Birth- if you push this Virgin Birth to the side or exclude it from serious consideration and teaching- you have altered the Nature of Jesus Christ, and once you do that- once you have a Jesus that is different from the Biblical Jesus- you have just created a new religion that is not Christianity- and which is, in fact, a *false* religion.

It is impossible to have true genuine Biblical Christianity and not have the very *same* Jesus that is revealed in Scripture in both His Humanity and Deity. And let me show you how serious the Apostles were about this issue by looking at **Galatians 1:8:**

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

The Apostles were to a man the kindest, gentlest, most loving men on earth. They worked with the worst of society and they were merciful

to those who did not know or who had not heard. But these same loving, kind men were pit bulls against anyone who tried to monkey around with Divine Truth. They would be the worst nightmare of any heretic or false teachers who brought in damnable heresy designed to deceive the sheep.

Paul said if we- if any of the other Apostles- or even an angel from Heaven teaches, preaches or prophesies another Gospel which contains other information that is not found in Scripture- the Apostle Paul said under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost-

... he is to be accursed

Let him be damned to hell without any possibility of ever being saved. That is exactly what Paul said here and be sure that you understand, dear friends, that it is a damnable lie to assault the Virgin conception, and the virgin birth, and by extension- the Nature of Jesus as being the God/Man. And anybody who does it is propagating a damnable lie and is accursed.

For example- if you say that Jesus is a Man but not God, if you say that He is a good man, a noble man, a religious leader, a prophet, the anointed one, if you say that Jesus is a created angel, if you say He was molded and shaped by God in the sense that He was an angelic spirit, if you say anything other than that Jesus was fully God and fully man in the same body at the same time without conflict of contradiction- that He was, in fact, the God/Man, you have pronounced upon yourself an eternal curse.

Those organizations that hang their hat on disputing or rejecting the Deity of Jesus Christ like Islam and Judaism and Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons and Gnostic mysticism and New Age and certain very popular Full Gospel groups- those groups are, in fact, heretical groups and should be utterly rejected by the believer.

All of the Christian Faith is built upon the Nature of Jesus as the God/Man which is defined from this Virgin conception. In order to be the Son of God- Jesus had to be born of God, and in order to be the Son of Man- Jesus had to be born of a woman, and in order to be the Son of David- Jesus had to be in the direct lineage of David. And that's precisely what happened. God came in human flesh.

You see, the Jewish leaders all believed that when the Messiah came- He would be a Son of David- that He would come through David's very own royal blood line. Going back to **2Samuel 7**- the Old Testament Scriptures teach that it would be one of David's greater sons who could come to be the King and the Messiah. But while they believed that the Messiah would be in the line of David- they did not necessarily believe that He would also be God.

In fact, when Jesus said He was the Son of David- the Jewish priests and Pharisees didn't have a problem with that. But when Jesus said that Abraham saw Him, and when Jesus said He was Son of God- in affect- making Himself equal with God- that was the issue that prompted them to kill Him. Please turn to **John 5:18**:

Therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

You see, Jesus could say He was the Son of Man all He wanted. Jesus could say He was the Son of David all He wanted because they could literally trace His lineage back to David and prove that which is why **Matthew 1** gives Christ's genealogy coming from Joseph, and why **Luke 3** gives Christ's genealogy coming from Mary.

The Jews never argued that Jesus was the Son of Man or in other words- that He was fully human. Nobody argued about Jesus being the Son of David. It was when Jesus said that He was the Son of God- which is the same thing as saying in first century Israel that He was God- that's when all the trouble started.

And that's when all the trouble starts today. Nobody has a problem with Jesus the Teacher or Jesus the Social Activist or Jesus the prophet or Jesus the feeder and the healer. No Muslim rejects Jesus- the Son of Man; no Jew rejects Jesus the Son of David. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormon and Gnostic mystics and even some agnostics atheists love and honor and respect and admire Jesus the man- the son of David.

But Paul teaches in **Romans 10:9** that in order for anyone to be saved- you must confess with your mouth- The *Lord* Jesus. You must say out loud that you believe and accept that in addition to Jesus being the Son of Man and the Son of David- that Jesus is also Son of God, that

He is fully Divine, that He is, in fact, God made flesh, He is Lord, He is Yahweh with a Body- and without the Virgin Birth- Jesus is not God.

Now remember that those Jewish leaders who executed Jesus Christ actually subbed out the execution to the Romans to carry it out- even though it was their idea. And those leaders that did that are no different than the atheists and the skeptics and the cultists and the liberals of today who denounce the God/Man, who denounce the Incarnation, who denounce the Virgin Conception, who denounce the Virgin Birth.

The last survey that I saw of seminaries in America indicated that only around 50% of the students in Protestant seminaries in America today believe in the Virgin Conception and Birth of Jesus Christ. Now remember that these are the men who supposedly are in training to be future Pastors and Church leaders, and also remember that if you deny the Virgin Conception and Birth of Jesus Christ- you're not a Christian.

So about half of those young men who are in training right now to become Pastors and Church leaders one day reject the very Heart of Christianity- the Deity of Jesus Christ- and by definition are heretics- yet they will all graduate and get their degrees! How is that possible?

Yet Luke goes to great lengths here to show us the importance of the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. He gives us details which show us the miraculous, astonishing, and inexplicable wonder of the Birth of Jesus Christ- which is the very moment when God inserted Himself into His Own Creation.

And Luke writes about this as being a mystery for us to stand in amazement over; something that is beyond our grasp from a scientific viewpoint because of the supernatural components of this virgin conception- yet at the same time- we are called- in the simplest of language- as was Mary- to fully accept it as reality- and as it being the explanation of the two-fold Nature of Christ as being both God and Man.

Now somebody might think, as I struggle to talk about this- this morning- that this whole idea of the Virgin Conception just fell out of the sky- that Luke and those of us who believe just made it up because it sounds neat and powerful.

After all, if all the Jewish leaders didn't believe it, and if all of the people didn't believe that Messiah was going to be God, and since they ended up killing Him anyway- don't we have reason to believe that this

was something concocted by people so as to cause Jesus to somehow rise above the crowd? And those who wanted to do that on His behalf really just invented Him as the God/Man?

And the answer to that question is, "Not at all." In fact, there are some serious foundations to this reality, and I want to show you what those foundations are this morning. Three of them.

Number one...and by the way, we're going to go through several points in the next few weeks...we're going to go through the foundations, the fallacies, and the facts of the virgin birth; but for today, the foundations. Is the concept of The Virgin Birth something new? Is this something invented later on at some time after Jesus died or does this have an historic and provable foundation? Three things give it a foundation.

Number one is the Old Testament. Go back to **Genesis 3** in your Bible. We mentioned this in a recent message and I want to go back to it because of its foundation character. You're in the first dawning of redemptive history here, Creation is found in chapters 1 and 2, and then in Chapter 3-Man falls into sin and he's cursed and woman is cursed by having pain in child bearing and having conflict in marriage. Man is cursed by having to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow and he, too, has to engage in the conflict that marriage brings.

Then, of course, then God pronounces a curse on the serpent who is Satan. And part of the curse on Satan that is found in verse 14 is he's going to be cursed more than every other animal. And then in verse 15, God says to Satan himself,

Genesis 3:15

... I will put enmity between you and the woman...

Now look at what it says next:

... and between your seed and her seed;...

He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel.

Now this is a very important prophecy. And this is really the second prophecy next to the one where God said, "In the day that you eat of the Tree of Life you shall surely die," that was a prophecy, too. But this is the first prophecy that looks forward toward Redemption after the Fall.

God says here- *"There's someone who is going to come- someone who is called **'her seed,'** and this one who is her seed will bruise the head of Satan- he will deal satan with a deadly crippling, crushing blow."* Well, Who is that?

The only Person Who could actually effect the deadly crushing blow on the head of Satan was Jesus Christ. Satan bruised His heel- obviously speaking of His death on the Cross- but that was only a temporary wound and out of that wound came Redemption- the final deadly killing blow to the head of satan.

And the risen Christ came forth out of the grave triumphant to give that fatal blow to Satan. That bruise will be executed on satan and it was won at the Cross, and it will be finally executed when he is sentenced and cast into the Lake of Fire forever.

Now notice here in Genesis that it says that the One who will crush the head of Satan is called "her seed". Do you see that? So what is so odd and remarkable about that phrase?

Because a woman doesn't have a seed. Only the man has the seed. For example- when God gave a Promise to Abraham- God said this in **Genesis 22:18**:

In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...

So we can see that the man has the seed. A woman doesn't have the seed. So how could a woman have a seed? Only one time did a woman ever have a seed of her own and that by the miraculous intervention of God.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day, if they had known **Genesis**, would have seen that. And then there is the prophet Isaiah. Turn to **Isaiah 7:14**. And we can see that the Jews were always looking for a sign- they were always looking for some supernatural indicator, some supernatural event that would point to God working. And so in verse 14 of chapter 7, Isaiah says,

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

You Jews want a sign? Here it is. "A virgin will be with child and bear a Son." Wow! That will be a sign. But that doesn't happen; that cannot happen. That's impossible. But when it does happen- you will

know. When a virgin brings forth a Son- you will know and she will call His name "Immanuel", which is God is with us. God in Hebrew is the word "el", so this name means: God is immanu, or God is now with us." So when this son is born of a virgin- you will know that God Himself is now here." Now that's a pretty clear sign.

So when a virgin is pregnant and has a son, that's a sign. It can't happen humanly. And even if parthenogenesis *could* happen- which it can't- but for the sake of discussion- even if it could happen- it could only produce a girl- and not a son.

Now by the way, the word used there for virgin, almah, is used only nine times in the Old Testament, eight of which require a translation of pure virginity. That's really what that word means. The New Testament equivalent of it is parthenos, and parthenos *always* means virgin.

And in **Matthew 1:22&23**- Matthew interprets what the angel told Mary as being the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy when he said:

Matthew 1:22-23

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

So Matthew, whose Gospel account was written as early as ten years before Luke's, already says that the Birth of Jesus is the fulfillment of **Isaiah 7's** prophecy, and Matthew used the word, parthenos, for virgin here.

And we must understand, dear friends, that Matthew recorded this with the purposeful intent to link the Virgin Birth of Jesus as being the fulfillment of what Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah 600 years earlier.

Jesus himself used the word parthenos three times in the parable of the Ten Virgins in **Matthew 25**. Luke used it twice of Mary. Luke used it in **The Acts 21** when he spoke of Philip's four virgin daughters. The Apostle Paul distinguishes between a wife and a virgin in 1Corinthians 7. And John records the word parthenos as descriptive of

men who had no sexual relationship with women, and were, therefore, totally yielded to God in **The Revelation 14:14**.

So parthenos means one who has had no sexual relationship at all. Mary was a virgin and that was the intent of **Isaiah 7:14**. So, for example- if a young girl became pregnant the normal way and had a son- that's not Isaiah's sign- because that happened all the time. But when a virgin is pregnant and brings into the world a son, that's a sign.

Now we know from examining the early writings that some of the old rabbis did believe that Messiah would be virgin born. One rabbi wrote,

"Messiah is to have no earthly father."

Another rabbi wrote,

"The birth of Messiah alone shall be without defect."

Another rabbi wrote,

"His birth shall not be like that of other men."

Another wrote,

"The birth of Messiah shall be like the dew of the Lord as drops upon the grass without the action of man."

So we know that there were some rabbis- probably some faithful believers- who understood that Messiah would be born of a virgin.

But that was certainly not the popular view of the Jewish priests at all. In fact, **John 7:27** they're very upset at Jesus and the question comes up, "Is Jesus the Christ?" And in verse 27 this is the response,

... we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.

So from this we can see that most of the Jews thought Jesus was just a common Galilean guy born in the town of Nazareth to Joseph and Mary.

And back in **John 6** this is further indicated. They were grumbling at Him, it says in **John 6:41**. And they were saying, *"Is not this Jesus the Son of Joseph whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven?' We don't get it."*

So maybe they did believe that there was some unique feature to Jesus' birth- but not necessarily a virgin birth. Maybe if they had really believe **Isaiah 7:14**, and **Genesis 3:15**, and Jeremiah's prophecy, maybe if they really did believe those things and really understood them under the illumination of the Spirit of God, and they would have known that Jesus had been born of a virgin and it might have changed how they viewed Him.

But they didn't see it. And while they may have expected some kind of special birth- they apparently did not look for a virgin birth and certainly not somebody born to a common couple in a dumpy place called Nazareth.

Now we also know that some rabbis had taught that Messiah would be of a heavenly origin. And some rabbis even said that He eternally existed. Back around 150 B.C., about 146 years before the birth of Christ- the book of Enoch- which is not a biblical book- it was not inspired- but it was read by many people- says this about the Messiah:

"He appears by the side of the Ancient of Days, His name has been named before God."

And there's also Psalm 2 where you have God saying this about the Son, that He is going to bring His Son into the world, He's going to install Him as King on Zion. And He says in **Psalms 2:7**:

... He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

So there was a Promise that God was going to bring a Son into the world Who would be the Ruler, and **Psalms 2** says He would rule the nations with a rod of iron, which is a Messianic prophecy. So if they had truly understood **Psalms 2**- the Jews would have understood that the Messiah- Who rules the world, Who rules in the kingdom of Israel at Zion- is going to be born the Son of God, and that He was already in God's Presence before time began. And that is quite a Foundation for

the Virgin Birth of the eternal Son. And, Lord willing, we will continue this next week.

Let's come and pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.